DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

TRUDY RAYMUNDO
Public Health Director

MAXWELL OHIKHUARE, M.D. Health Officer

CORWIN PORTER, MPH, R.E.H.S Division Chief, Environmental Health Services

CONTACT: Corwin Porter, REHS
Division Chief
(800) 442-2283

Division of Environmental Health Services: (800) 442-2283

- □ 385 North Arrowhead Avenue San Bernardino, CA 92415-0160
- □ 8575 Haven Avenue, Suite 130 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730-9105
- □ 15900 Smoke Tree, Suite 131 Hesperia, CA 92345
- □ San Bernardino County Vector Control Program 2355 East 5th Street – San Bernardino, CA 92410-5201

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Issues Advisory on Methylmercury-contaminated Fish in Silverwood Lake in San Bernardino County

San Bernardino: The California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has issued specific guidelines for Silverwood Lake in San Bernardino County due to elevated methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) levels in fish. Methylmercury can harm the brain and nervous system of people, especially unborn babies and children. PCBs affect many body functions, and have been found to cause cancer in animal studies.

The guidelines recommend that all fishers avoid eating any striped bass, blackfish, or tui chub from Silverwood Lake. Women aged 18-45 and children under 18 should also avoid eating any largemouth bass, bluegill or channel catfish from Silverwood Lake. Men over 18 and women older than 45 can eat one serving per week of largemouth bass, bluegill, or channel catfish. Rainbow trout from Silverwood Lake have much lower levels of contaminants and can be safely eaten up to seven times per week by all groups. Tule perch consumption should be limited to one serving per week by all groups.

Last week, the OEHHA issued new general guidelines regarding wild-caught fish in lakes throughout California. Several lakes in San Bernardino County were listed in this general advisory, which covers fish from lakes and reservoirs that do not have their own specific advisories. People who visit lakes within San Bernardino County (other than Silverwood Lake which has a specific advisory) should follow the general guidelines issued by the OEHHA. The OEHHA recommends that women aged 18-45 and children under 18 should choose wild-caught rainbow trout and smaller brown trout over bass, carp, and larger brown trout. Rainbow trout and smaller brown trout have lower methylmercury levels compared to other fish.

The health advisory and guidelines are available on the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment website at www.oehha.ca.gov.

For more information, contact the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment at (916) 324-0955 or (909) 764-0955.

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